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# Danforth Speech-Cambodia

Max S. Baucus

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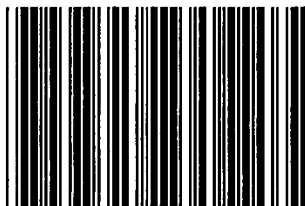
**November-1979**

**Danforth Speech by Max re: Cambodia**

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**BAUCUS**

Nov: 1979

# Dunforth Speech - Cambodia

by Max Baucus

PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA, MUST HAVE BEEN A BEAUTIFUL CITY. TEN YEARS AGO, SOME 600,000 PEOPLE LIVED THERE, ALONG BROAD TREE-LINED AVENUES, SET IN A FRENCH TROPICAL ATMOSPHERE.

TODAY PHNOM PENH IS A GHOST TOWN. ONE CAN STAND IN THE MIDDLE OF A MAJOR STREET, LOOK BOTH WAYS AND SEE NOT A SINGLE CAR. MOST BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN INTENTIONALLY DAMAGED OR ALLOWED TO GO TO RUIN. A FEW STRAY CATTLE ROAM THE STREETS. WHERE THERE WERE 600,000 RESIDENTS TEN YEARS AGO, TODAY THERE ARE PERHAPS 30,000. THERE ARE NO STORES OR RESTAURANTS. A FEW PEOPLE SELL WHAT FOOD IS AVAILABLE ON CURBSTONES. THE MEANS OF EXCHANGE IS BARTER.

FIVE YEARS AGO, A RADICAL COMMUNIST, POL POT, CAME TO POWER. HE WAS ANTI-URBAN, ANTI-WESTERN AND ANTI-TECHNOLOGY. HE SYSTEMATICALLY SENTENCED TO DEATH ANYONE WHO COULD SPEAK A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. HE KILLED 90 PERCENT OF CAMBODIA'S PHYSICIANS AND MOST OF ITS INTELLECTUALS. HE DESTROYED THE PHONE SYSTEM, MOST MACHINERY, TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, AND THE UNIVERSITY. HE CLOSED THE SCHOOLS.

HE MARCHED THE RESIDENTS OF PHNOM PENH OUT INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE WHERE THEY WERE LEFT TO DIE. AND DIE THEY DID. CAMBODIA, WHICH SIX YEARS AGO HAD A POPULATION OF SEVEN TO EIGHT MILLION PEOPLE, NOW HAS A POPULATION OF ~~SEVEN~~ FOUR MILLION.

ON CHRISTMAS DAY OF LAST YEAR, VIETNAM INVADED CAMBODIA. THEY OUSTED POL POT FROM POWER AND DROVE HIM AND HIS FOLLOWERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY TOWARD THE BORDER OF THAILAND. NINETY PERCENT OF THE CROPS WERE INTENTIONALLY DESTROYED AS COMBATANTS SOUGHT TO DEPRIVE ONE ANOTHER OF THE MEANS OF SURVIVAL. MALNUTRITION AND DISEASE BECAME RAMPANT.

THE RESULT, IS THAT THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ARE DYING EACH DAY, AND AN ESTIMATED 2½ MILLION PEOPLE ARE FACING AN ACUTE SHORTAGE OF FOOD. THOSE WHO ARE STRONG ENOUGH TO WALK ARE FLEEING THE BORDER INTO THAILAND TO SEEK RELIEF. BY NOW 500,000 ARE PILED UP AT BORDER AREAS WHERE THEY LIE ON THE GROUND.

THOSE OF US WHO VISITED THOSE REFUGEE AREAS WILL NEVER FORGET WHAT WE EXPERIENCED.

WHEN ONE SEES A PHOTOGRAPH OF A STARVING CHILD IN A NEWS MAGAZINE, IT IS EASY TO THINK OF THE CHILD AS AN ISOLATED CASE. A PROFESSIONAL HAS TAKEN THE PICTURE AND OBVIOUSLY, HE HAS SEARCHED OUT THE WORST. WE SAW NOT ONE OR TWO STARVING CHILDREN, BUT HUNDREDS, PERHAPS THOUSANDS OF THEM. WE SAW PEOPLE DYING BEFORE OUR VERY EYES. WE SAW BABIES WHO WERE WIZENED UP LIKE LITTLE OLD MEN---CHILDREN WITH STICK-LIKE LIMBS AND DISTENDED STOMACHS. WE SAW PEOPLE LYING ON THE GROUND WHO WERE UNABLE TO GET UP. INTERNATIONAL RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS HAD SET UP WHAT WERE CALLED HOSPITALS. THE HOSPITALS WERE NOTHING MORE THAN LONG ROWS OF MATS UNDER SHEETS OF BLUE PLASTIC. I TALKED TO ONE MAN WHO COMPLAINED OF A HIGH FEVER. I ASKED HIM WHY HE DIDN'T WALK 100 YARDS TO GET HELP AT THE HOSPITAL. HE SAID HE WAS TOO WEAK TO WALK THAT FAR.

FLIES WERE EVERYWHERE. THE DYING WERE TOO WEAK TO SHAKE THEM OFF.

AMONG THE DYING, SILENCE IS NOTICEABLE. DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF THOUSANDS, A WHISPER MAY BE HEARD. THERE IS NO LAUGHTER. THERE IS NO CONVERSATION. THERE IS NO NOISE OF ANY KIND. THERE IS THE STILLNESS OF DEATH.

ONE YOUNG WOMAN, INCONTINENT AND ON THE VERGE OF DEATH  
COULD WHISPER BUT A SINGLE WORD: "TEARS".

WE WERE TOLD THAT THE PEOPLE WE SAW WERE AMONG THE STRONGEST.  
THEY AT LEAST COULD WALK ACROSS CAMBODIA INTO THAILAND. THE WEAKER  
ONES COULD NOT MAKE IT THAT FAR. THEY WERE LEFT BEHIND. / THEY ARE  
DYING RIGHT NOW.

THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA IS MADE EVEN MORE TRAGIC BY THE FACT  
THAT IT IS A MAN-MADE---NOT A NATURAL DISASTER. THE GOVERNMENTS OF  
VIET NAM AND CAMBODIA, FEARING THAT SOME OF THE FOOD MIGHT GO TO  
THE FOLLOWERS OF POL POT, HAVE CONTINUALLY FRUSTRATED INTERNATIONAL  
ATTEMPTS TO OPEN A LAND BRIDGE INTO THE INTERIOR OF CAMBODIA. AS A  
RESULT, THOSE WHO ARE ABLE MUST COME TO THE REFUGEE CAMPS WITH THE  
HOPE THAT THERE WILL BE ENOUGH FOOD TO BRING THEM SUSTENANCE FOR  
ANOTHER DAY OF LIFE.

FOR DEPLORABLY POLITICAL REASONS, THE DECISION HAS BEEN MADE  
IN HANOI AND PHNOM PENH TO STARVE OUT THE ENEMY. THE DECISION HAS  
BEEN MADE TO LET BABIES DIE IN THEIR MOTHERS' ARMS, AND OLD PEOPLE  
LIE ON THE GROUND UNTIL DEATH BRINGS RELIEF. FOOD AND MEDICAL  
SUPPLIES HAVE BECOME WEAPONS OF WAR, LIKE TANKS AND GUNS. AND,  
FROM THE STANDPOINT OF HANOI, IF THE FOUR MILLION REMAINING PEOPLE  
OF CAMBODIA ARE REDUCED IN NUMBER EVEN FURTHER, SO MUCH THE BETTER.

THE BROAD QUESTION WHICH CAMBODIA FORCES THE WORLD TO ANSWER  
CONCERNS THE VALUE PLACED ON THE LIVES OF HUMAN BEINGS. TOTALITARIAN  
GOVERNMENTS VIEW PEOPLE AS THE MINIONS OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM.

IN CAMBODIA, TWO COMPETING REGIMES HAVE ALREADY COST THE LIVES OF ~~THE~~ <sup>3</sup> MILLION PEOPLE. TO SUIT THE PURPOSES OF POLITICAL FACTIONS, MILLIONS WERE MARCHED INTO THE COUNTRY SIDE TO DIE. CROPS WERE DESTROYED. ACCESS TO FOOD AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES IS BEING WITHHELD. CAMBODIA TODAY, WITH ITS STARVING MILLIONS, ITS ABANDONED CITIES, ITS COLLAPSING BUILDINGS IS A MONUMENT TO THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF TOTALITARIANISM.

THE QUESTION OF HUMAN VALUE HAS BEEN ANSWERED IN HANOI AND PHNOM PENH. NOW YOU AND I ARE CALLED UPON TO ANSWER IT IN ~~THE~~ OUR COUNTRY, AND IN OUR HOME TOWNS. UNITED STATES, IN THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA.

WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE OUR ANSWER IN A QUITE TANGIBLE WAY. ALREADY, THE WORLD COMMUNITY HAS PLEDGED ~~\$210~~ <sup>\$14 MILLION</sup> MILLION FOR THE RELIEF OF THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE. AN ADMIRABLE EXAMPLE HAS BEEN SET BY THE PEOPLE OF NORWAY. IN ONE DAY OF <sup>A</sup> TELEVISION <sup>A</sup> ~~SOLICITATION~~ <sup>APPEAL</sup>, NORWEGIANS GAVE THE EQUIVALENT OF \$4 PER PERSON. WE ARE ASKED TO RESPOND IN A SIMILAR FASHION BY GIVING TO THE CHURCH COLLECTION FOR CAMBODIAN RELIEF. BY ANSWERING THIS APPEAL, WE CAN ASSURE THAT THOSE CAMBODIANS WHO REACH THE THAI BORDER ARE CARED FOR AND THAT SUCH FOOD AS IS ALLOWED INTO CAMBODIA IS READILY AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION. IN ADDITION, WE CAN REMEMBER THE PEOPLE OF CAMBODIA, IN OUR PRAYERS AND IN OUR DAILY LIVES. WE CAN KEEP THE ISSUE ALIVE IN THE CONSCIENCE OF THE WORLD, AND SO ENCOURAGE CONCESSIONS IN HANOI AND PHNOM PENH.

9 IN MANY WAYS, THESE ARE DIFFICULT TIMES FOR US AS INDIVIDUALS, AND AS AMERICANS. IN THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON OF 1979, AS WE LEAVE THE '70'S BEHIND AND PREPARE TO ENTER A NEW DECADE OF CHALLENGES, LET US SEND A SIGNAL TO THE WORLD. LET US RESPOND TO THE PLIGHT OF THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE WITH CARE, SACRIFICE, AND ACTION---THE SAME CARE, SACRIFICE, AND ACTION THAT WILL MARK OUR RESPONSES TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE '80's.

IN RESPONDING TO THE PEOPLE OF CAMBODIA, OUR VIEW OF THE DIGNITY AND VALUE OF HUMAN LIVES IS PRESENTED IN VERY STRIKING TERMS. THE PEOPLE OF CAMBODIA ARE QUITE DIFFERENT FROM YOU AND ME. THEY LIVE HALF WAY AROUND THE WORLD ~~FROM US~~. THEY SPEAK A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE. THEY HOLD A DIFFERENT POLITICAL IDEOLOGY... BUT THEY ARE HUMAN BEINGS. THEY ARE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD. THEY ARE, IN CHRISTIAN TERMS, OUR NEIGHBORS. AND WE MUST LOVE THEM AS OURSELVES.

9 [ TODAY, WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY, INDEED AN OBLIGATION, TO REACH OUT TO THESE PEOPLE----TO FEED THE HUNGRY, TO HEAL THE SICK, TO COMFORT THE BROKEN-HEARTED, TO LIFT THE SPIRITS OF THE DESOLATE. WE MUST RESPOND; WE MUST ACT.

"WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES IN HIS GLORY,  
ESCORTED BY ALL THE ANGELS, THEN HE WILL TAKE HIS SEAT  
ON HIS THRONE OF GLORY. ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE  
ASSEMBLED BEFORE HIM AND HE WILL SEPARATE MEN  
FROM ONE ANOTHER AS THE SHEPHERD SEPARATES SHEEP  
FROM GOATS. HE WILL PLACE THE SHEEP ON HIS RIGHT  
HAND AND THE GOATS ON HIS LEFT. THEN THE KING  
WILL SAY TO THOSE ON HIS RIGHT HAND, 'COME, YOU  
WHOM MY FATHER HAS BLESSED, TAKE FOR YOUR HERITAGE  
THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU SINCE THE FOUNDATION  
OF THE WORLD. FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME  
FOOD; I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME DRINK; I WAS  
A STRANGER AND YOU MADE ME WELCOME; NAKED AND YOU  
CLOTHED ME, SICK AND YOU VISITED ME, IN PRISON AND  
YOU CAME TO SEE ME.' THEN THE VIRTUOUS WILL SAY  
TO HIM IN REPLY, 'LORD, WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY  
AND FEED YOU; OR THIRSTY AND GIVE YOU DRINK?  
WHEN DID WE SEE YOU A STRANGER AND MAKE YOU  
WELCOME; NAKED AND CLOTHE YOU; SICK OR IN PRISON  
AND GO TO SEE YOU?' AND THE KING WILL ANSWER,  
'I TELL YOU SOLEMNLY, IN SO FAR AS YOU DID THIS  
TO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE BROTHERS OF MINE,  
YOU DID IT TO ME."

THANK YOU. GOD BLESS YOU.